

Veronica Bustillos
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Portland, Oregon
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TO: House Committee on Education

SUBJECT: Support HB 4079 to Safeguard Students and Families

Chair Hudson and members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Veronica Bustillos, and I work in Portland, Oregon. I work closely with students and families in school settings, and I am writing in strong support of HB 4079 to Safeguard Students and Families.

When federal guidance designating schools as “sensitive areas” was rescinded in 2025, it created fear and uncertainty for students, families, and school staff across Oregon. Since then, increased federal enforcement activity near school campuses has led to real disruptions, lockdowns, heightened anxiety, and confusion for families simply trying to ensure their children are safe at school.

Schools should be places of learning, stability, and trust. They are often the safest and most consistent spaces in a child’s life. When law enforcement activity occurs in or around school grounds, especially without clear protocols or communication, it undermines safety and creates fear that directly impacts student learning, attendance, and well-being.

I support HB 4079 because it establishes clear, consistent, and transparent communication expectations that help keep students, families, and staff safe. This bill recognizes that inconsistent responses across schools create unequal safety, and that every student—regardless of immigration status or the school they attend deserves protection and dignity.

As someone who works with students and families, I have seen how fear around immigration enforcement affects young people: increased stress, disengagement from school, and parents afraid to show up for meetings or emergencies. HB 4079 helps prevent that harm by ensuring schools are prepared, informed, and able to respond appropriately while prioritizing student safety.

HB 4079 is part of the 2026 Immigrant Justice Package and reflects the voices of educators, families, advocates, and community-based organizations across Oregon. These are community-led solutions that strengthen not divide our schools and communities.

I urge you to vote YES on HB 4079 and stand with Oregon students and families by keeping schools safe, welcoming, and focused on education.

Thank you for your time and leadership.

Sincerely,

Veronica Bustillos